



WHITE HOUSE INITIATIVE ON ASIAN AMERICANS AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS

Southern California Regional Roundtables

Summary

On October 20 and 21, 2010, Kiran Ahuja, Executive Director of the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) and Sefa Aina of the President's Advisory Commission on AAPIs, convened four roundtable discussions with approximately 100 community leaders and federal agency regional officials to learn about issues facing AAPIs in the Los Angeles area. The discussions were designed to serve as the Initiative's primary community outreach vehicle to inform agencies on issues affecting AAPI communities and serve as a bridge connecting regional agency officials with AAPI community leaders to:

- 1) Encourage AAPI participation in federal programs and services; and
- 2) Ensure Administration programs and policies are effectively serving AAPI communities.

The roundtables, held at the Asian Pacific American Legal Center, Guam Communications Network, and Search to Involve Pilipino Americans, focused on the following issues: civil rights, immigrants and workers; healthy communities; Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders; and educational opportunities and youth. Below is a summary of concrete recommendations to the federal agencies provided during the roundtable discussions.

Recommendations

Department of Education

- ED should provide incentives through its programs, such as Race to the Top, to disaggregate data based on ethnicity, so that communities' needs – especially those of Southeast Asian and Pacific Islanders – are not masked.
- Under the current **Minority Serving Institution** rules, institutions cannot qualify under more than one designation, when in some cases, minority students have the highest concentrations in community colleges where there are multiple ethnic populations, i.e., Hispanic and AAPIs in Orange County. ED should allow institutions to qualify under both designations to better meet the needs of both student populations.
- ED should target Pacific Islander students, in addition to Hispanic and African American, in programs, for example, to apply for Federal Student Aid. ED should also focus its anti-bullying efforts on Internet bullying (social media stalking), which is prevalent among AAPI students.
- ED should use the framework for DLL (Dual Language Learners) rather than ELL/ESL (English Language Learners/English as a Second Language), focusing on language assets.

Department of Health and Human Services

- HHS should provide incentives and reimbursement for healthcare services provided in multiple languages.
- The Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities in Southern California seek information and technical assistance on building a community health center.
- Clinical access does not only flow through clinics, i.e., HHS and the **Health Resources and Services Administration** should consider community navigation models in funding opportunities.

Department of Homeland Security

- DHS should monitor and improve the E-Verify system since there has been a high prevalence of mismatching of names and naturalization issues.
- DHS should draft and adhere to the mandated Limited English Proficient (LEP) guidance, as there has been a breakdown of information communicated to LEP immigrants in detention centers. The handbook distributed in detention centers should be provided in languages other than English and Spanish. In particular, in the Mira Loma Detention Center, Chinese, Vietnamese and South Asian detainees are not receiving appropriate services because of the lack of linguistically accessible information.
- DHS should also educate community organizations and individuals on how to file a complaint with the Office for Civil Liberties and Civil Rights, as well as reduce the fees for citizenship or publicize waivers.

Department of Housing and Urban Development

- In the current foreclosure crisis, HUD should monitor and ensure that HUD-certified agencies and banks provide information in multiple Asian languages.

Department of Justice

- DOJ should adhere to OMB Management Directive 15, which requires federal agencies to analyze and disaggregate data under the Asian American and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander classifications. Current DOJ incarceration rates do not include AAPIs and classify them as “Others,” masking high AAPI entry and reentry rates; these rates are particularly high in the Long Beach and Carson communities in Southern California, where the Pacific Islander and Cambodian communities are concentrated. San Francisco County Juvenile Probation Department currently disaggregates data, which has shown that Samoan youth have higher arrest rates than African Americans, with rates for Vietnamese following African Americans. In all, Samoan, African American, and Vietnamese youths have higher arrest rates than any other ethnic groups in San Francisco County.
- **DOJ Community Relations Service** should outreach to churches and other faith-based and community organizations, central to these communities, to engage with and build dialogue between the Pacific Islander community and law enforcement. There have been a series of police beatings and shootings of Pacific Islander community members in the Long Beach area, which have contributed to a tense relationship between the community and law enforcement.

Department of Labor

- The **Wage and Hour Division** should investigate wage and hour violations in high-risk industries in which AAPI workers are concentrated – taxi workers and homecare, among others – where there are patterns of abuse and violations. According to a participant, forty percent of Los Angeles’ economy is underground, and individuals are working in sweatshop conditions. There is a need to monitor violations in these industries.
- The **Occupational Safety and Health Administration** should update and revise the permissible exposure levels of chemicals, which are currently specific to only one demographic that is not reflective of the broader workforce exposed to chemicals. In California there are 115,000 nail salon workers – over 80% of the workforce are Vietnamese American, predominantly women of reproductive age. There are serious ventilation concerns in nail salons. ***OSHA should revise and standardize the Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) rules*** to fully and accurately describe the chemicals in products in layman’s terms and further translate the forms into Vietnamese and other Asian languages. Since many nail salon workers are considered independent contractors, **Wage and Hour Division** employees should make themselves available to provide information to workers and educate them on their rights as independent contractors.
- The **Employment Training Administration** should focus on providing vocational English as second language courses in community colleges and trade schools.
- It is important that homecare workers are included under the Fair Labor Standard Act, from which they are currently exempt and unable to receive payment for overtime.

Equal Employment and Opportunity Commission

- EEOC should include claims and informational materials in multiple Asian languages so that individuals may file claims of workplace discrimination.

Other Recurring Themes

- Need to **disaggregate data** as a means of targeting underserved communities in existing federal programs.
- Need to conduct **outreach and education** for communities on civil rights complaint processes (and create a **flow chart** on each agencies’ website), as well as available resources, across the federal agencies.
- **Language access** issues across the agencies for Asian American languages as well as Pacific Islanders languages.
- Need for **interagency collaboration** to address breadth of issues facing AAPI communities.
- Need to **increase access** to internships and other opportunities for AAPI researchers and pipelines for education and federal careers.
- **Place-based initiatives** in Southern California are problematic and do not allow for resources to go to diverse AAPI communities.
- Increase awareness, education, and access to **federal contracting opportunities** for AAPIs.
- **Federal grant programs** must be accessible to grassroots community organizations.

Resources Provided

- Information on becoming a GSA vendor (to be a federal government contractor).

- Doing Business with GSA Small Business utilization [brochure](#). Also, please find a link to their page on registering to do business with the federal government [here](#).
- Find SBA programs specifically designed for small businesses and to provide training for small business owners online [here](#).
- List of senior officials serving on the [Interagency Working Group of the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders](#).
- Recently launched anti-bullying website: www.bullyinginfo.org (This website under FindYouthInfo.gov was created by the Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs, which is composed of representatives from 12 Federal agencies that support programs and services focusing on youth).

Participating Organizations and Agencies

API Equality, Los Angeles
 Asian American Studies Center & Department
 University of California, Los Angeles
 Asian and Pacific Islanders California Action Network
 Asian Pacific American Legal Center
 Asian Pacific Islander American Health Forum
 Asian Pacific Islander Small Business Program
 Asian Pacific Policy & Planning Council (A3PCON)
 Asian Youth Center
 CA Commission on APIA Affairs
 CA Healthy Nail Salon Collaborative
 California Fund for Youth Organizing
 California State University, Fullerton
 Cambodian Association of America
 Chinatown Service Center
 CHLA
 Empowering Pacific Island Communities
 Families in Good Health, St. Mary Medical Center
 Filipino Health Coalition
 Guam Communications Network
 Japanese American Citizens League - Pacific Southwest District
 KAHA
 Khmer Girls in Action
 Khmer Parent Association
 Koreatown Immigrant Workers Alliance
 Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics, Inc.
 Mult-Ethnic Collaborative of Community Agencies
 National Asian Pacific American Families Against Substance Abuse
 National Korean American Service & Education Consortium
 Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islander Alliance
 Office of Council President Eric Garcetti, Los Angeles City Council District 13
 Office of Mayor Antonio R. Villaraigosa
 Orange County Asian and Pacific Islander Community Alliance Inc.
 PacBiz/Pacifika Voice

Pacific Asian Consortium in Employment
Pacific Asian Counseling Services
Pacific Island Education & Retention, UCLA
Pacific Islander Health Partnership
Pals for Health
Pasifica Financial Corp.
Pomona College
Prevention and Early Intervention Services, CA Reducing Disparities Project - API Workgroup
Samoan National Nurses Association
Search To Involve Pilipino Americans
Second Samoan
Southeast Asian Community Alliance
Thai Association
Thai Community Development Center
Thai Health Network
Tongan Community Service Center
U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, Region IX
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights, Region IX
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office on Pacific Health and Human Services
U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties
U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration, Region IX
U.S. Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division, Region IX
UCLA Asian American Studies Center
UCLA Labor Center
UCLA School of Public Health
Union of Pan Asian Communities
United Cambodian Community
USC Asian Pacific American Student Services
Vietnamese Community of Orange County